

One Man's Heaven

a romantic comedy by

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FADE IN

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/LIVINGROOM - EVENING

In the livingroom of their spartan two bedroom bachelor apartment, JUDD does the books for their paint company and RUSSELL sketches. The news is on the television and it's a real horror show. Judd gets fed-up and throws his pencil down. He looks over at Russell as he gets up and starts to pace around the room.

JUDD

Hungry? How about Salvador Deli?

Russell frowns.

JUDD

(continuing)

Well then, it looks like Slack Heaven...

RUSSELL

Can't we do something different tonight?

JUDD

It's Friday night, we've been painting all week. Everyone'll be at Slack Heaven: human beings mating; Jimmy Z with the discount for alcoholics...

(beat)

What's your deal? You're in a weird mood.

RUSSELL

I'm just sick-'n-tired of doing the same thing every night: hoagies from Salvador Deli, a few beers at Slack Heaven, then you make an ass out of yourself in front of at least five girls, then home...

JUDD

.. a quick wank and it's lights out.

(beat)

Listen, tonight's special: I'm not gonna make an ass outta myself. I'm gonna be totally suave. Watch. I bet there are two lovely ladies waiting for us downstairs now...

RUSSELL

No more "You show me yours I'll show you mine"?

JUDD

No way, man. I outgrew that shit a long time ago.

Russell grimaces in disbelief.

JUDD

(continuing)

What? I promise!

EXT. SLACK HEAVEN/RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Judd and Russell walk downstairs and enter the bar located under their apartment which feels more like an open-air boardwalk cafe than a bar.

INT. SLACK HEAVEN - EVENING

Judd and Russell take seats at the bar in front of JIMMY the bartender.

JUDD

Jimmy, what's happenin'?

JIMMY

What a surprise! My favorite non-customers...

(beat)

You guys can pay for your own beers tonight. The man-upstairs said, "No more freeloaders."

JUDD

I thought that all-you-could-drink was part of our rent...?

Jimmy nods 'no'.

JIMMY

You guys eating tonight or sticking to the liquid diet?

RUSSELL

Tuna hoagie with everything on it, extra fries...

JUDD

I'll have a veggie-burger and salad...

Jimmy puts two beers down in front of them and goes off to put in their order. Russell and Judd savor the first sip of cold beer after their long work week. Judd slaps Russell on

the back in a fatherly manner in order to cheer him up.

JUDD

(continuing)

Painting, my boy... if you can't change the world the least you can do is paint it.

RUSSELL

Change the world? I don't even think you live in it, man.

Judd pulls some cash from his pocket.

JUDD

Well, in my world, we made a hundred-eighty bucks this week which means we can stay out late tonight...

RUSSELL

Or pay the rent for next week...

JUDD

Y'see, that's your problem: you're too future oriented. Y'haveta live in the moment, the present... "be one with the beer, grasshopper."

Jimmy brings their food over and puts it down in front of them.

RUSSELL

Thanks, Jimmy.

(to Judd)

OK, now no more talking, Mister Jerk-off Artist, I wanna eat in peace.

JUDD

Jerk-off-artist. Is that what I am?

RUSSELL

Right now you're just an apprentice Jerk-off Artist. That's it. It's quiet time now.

Judd can't resist annoying Russell.

JUDD

So right: we're all just Jerk-off Artists. I happen to be marginally overeducated and you happen to be marginal, but we're all just... goddamn, will you look at that!

Judd drops his burger as a sultry GIRL enters and passes them.

RUSSELL

You promised...

Judd jumps off of his stool and rushes up to her. Russell tries to grab him and pull him back but it's too late. Judd approaches the Girl.

JUDD (smiling charmingly)
Hey, haven't I seen you dance naked
someplace before?

The Girl looks Judd up and down.

GIRL
Only in your dreams, asshole.

Judd stands there a second before heading back to the bar and taking his stool next to Russell.

RUSSELL
You're a mess, man; you're never
going to meet a girl like that.

JUDD
Well, isn't that the cat calling the
kettle black. You're just sitting
there. At least I'm giving it my
best shot...

RUSSELL
You call making a complete asshole
out of yourself giving it your best
shot? Why can't you just say, "Don't
I know you from somewhere?" or "Live
around here often?"?

JUDD
Oh yeah, "Nice T-shirt, honey" goes
a long way these days!

(beat)
Here's the rub: if I stay upstairs
watching the tube I have a zero
percent chance of meeting the girl of
my dreams. If I go out, my chances
increase exponentially.

Russell smiles, playing along with Judd's game.

JUDD
(continuing)
And if - somehow, some way - I
personally introduce myself to every
girl in the establishment - whether
it be by hook or crook - then those
already exponentially increased
chances yet again double. Now do ya
hear me talkin', son, or are you a

sinner?

RUSSELL

All of the above.

(beat)

Go ahead, try again, Prince Charming.

Russell nods at GIRL 2 who is sitting alone. Judd walks over and casually pulls up a chair next to her. She regards him suspiciously.

JUDD

Do you mind if I ask where you come from?

GIRL 2

Why do you want to know?

JUDD

Ah... because you look like you're insane and I always wanted to know where insane people come from.

This is not the right answer. Girl 2 looks down on him.

JUDD

(continuing)

No, really, my medium told me...

GIRL 2

Medium?

JUDD

Claire Voyante, she...

GIRL 2

Clairevoyante, like a palmreader...?

JUDD

Yeah, that's her name: Claire...
Voyante. Y'get it?

GIRL 2

Listen, I can see that you have some kind of deep emotional retardation probably stemming from your dysfunctional family, so...

JUDD (laughing, embarrassed)

Excuse me?

GIRL 2

Have a nice evening...

Girl 2 gets up walks away. Judd comes back over and sits down next to Russell who's still nursing his beer and smiling an "I told you so" smile.

RUSSELL

Y'know what your problem is?

JUDD

Which one?

RUSSELL

Your main problem.

JUDD

Yeah. Something about emotional retardation and a dysfunctional family.

The bar door opens and MARY (24) enters. She's an earthy-crunchy girl ironically wearing a print dress and army boots. Russell shudders in his seat and tries to become unnoticeable. Mary stops at the door and turns back around to look into the street.

JUDD

(continuing)

What... what is it?

RUSSELL

It's her, Mary, the one I told you about, the one from my dream, the one I painted... last month...

JUDD

What-the-hell-are-you-talking-about?

RUSSELL

Listen, I gotta go... I'll see ya later...

Judd sits there dumbfounded. Russell skirts out of the other side of the bar leaving his meal hardly touched.

On the other side of the bar Mary holds the door open for JULIE (24) and they head toward the bar.

JULIE

If I have to spend one more second getting coffee for that asshole who sits in the back all day counting stock, I'm gonna slay someone!

MARY

I told you not to study History. I mean, I have my Masters in English lit and I work in the freakin' Banana Republic!

JULIE

The Gap, love: I work in the Banana

Republic.

MARY

Whatever. Anyway, we'll never have
real jobs... nobody likes a
smartass...

Judd can't take his eyes off of Mary. She and Julie take two
seats at the bar a few stools away from him. Jimmy
approaches the girls to get their order.

JIMMY

What can I get for you ladies this
evening?

JULIE

World peace and general happiness to
go.

MARY

Or intravenous prozac.
(beat)
But we'll start with two beers.

JIMMY

You got it.

Jimmy heads off to get their beers.

MARY

So today I'm taking out the
garbage - very romantic - and I'm
bending over because there's this
hangar caught in the chute, and the
vermin comes right up behind me and
I can just feel his horny eyes glued
to my butt, so I turn around and the
bastard starts talking to me, but he
can't even look me in the eyes, he
just stands there staring at my chest
as if he hasn't seen anything like it
since he stopped breastfeeding.

JULIE

Probably hasn't.

Jimmy puts down their beers and goes away. Mary takes out a
cigarette and Judd grabs some matches off of the counter. He
awkwardly crashes through the barstools that separate him
from Mary as he fumbles to light a match. Judd finally
lights one and holds it out in front of Mary's cigarette.

Mary and Julie regard him suspiciously. Mary does a
doubletake and looks deep into Judd's eyes. Judd awkwardly
stares back.

JUDD

Hi...

JULIE (abruptly)
Can we help you?

Judd pauses for a beat.

JUDD
Just makin' sure that that cigarette
burns safely. I'm on the Fire Safety
Commission for Slack Heaven.

JULIE
That's very considerate of you,
Fireman Joe, but I think we're
alright for now.

Judd is not taking Julie's hint.

JUDD (sincerely, to Mary)
How y'doin'?

MARY
I've been better. But... I've been
worse too.

JUDD
I heard you know my friend Russell...

MARY
Don't think so.

JUDD
Said he painted a picture of you -
but I never saw it...

Mary tries to remember.

JULIE
Oh yeah, the lunatic... about two
months ago, remember?

Mary thinks for a second. Judd scratches his arm and
inadvertently raises his shirt sleeve exposing his tattoo.

JULIE
(continuing)
What - fleas?

Mary notices the tattoo on Judd's arm, reaches over and lifts
his sleeve with curiosity.

JUDD
Your friend has a really endearing
sense of humor.

We see a tattoo of BAR CODE on Judd's arm, as if an amount

will ring on the register if a cashier scans him. Mary shakes her head with pseudo-disapproval when she sees it.

MARY

Tsk, tsk, tsk... What's this?

JUDD

Birthday present: they were out of "Mom", "six, six, six" and "Wynona Forever" and so there wasn't much of a choice...

MARY

It's not because you feel that everything in your life has been reduced to a number?

Julie looks over and does a doubletake when she sees Judd's tattoo for the first time. Her mouth drops wide open.

JUDD

Oh yeah, I never thought of that!

Mary slowly lifts her leg while holding her hand over her ankle. She slowly takes her hand off of her ankle to reveal... her tattoo of a BAR CODE.

INT. RUSSELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Russell tosses in bed. Suddenly he gets up. He turns on the lights, wipes his eyes, then sits in front of his blank easel. Russell picks up a paint brush and starts to paint intensely.

INT. FRANCOISE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FRANCOISE (37) is sleeping soundly. We don't see if she is alone or with someone.

INT. RUSSELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Russell sketches meticulously. He looks almost as if he's possessed. Cold sweat builds on his skin as he paints furiously.

After a moment Russell looks intensely at the sketch, puts down his charcoals and regards his work. Something is missing but he can't tell what it is.

He heads back over to the bed. He gets under the covers and shuts off the lights. He just lies there for a beat then he pops the lights back on, gets up, and goes to the easel.

We see the sketch for the first time: it's a sketch of a woman. She's wearing a dress and she appears to be dancing or moving in a lighthearted way.

Russell looks at the sketch and smiles. He widens her grin then erases the lower portion of her left arm which flails in the air. He carefully draws her smoking a cigarette.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Francoise suddenly wakes up and puts on her shoes; she's still wearing her pajamas. It's as if she's sleepwalking. Her husband DON (45) slowly wakes.

DON

What's up, hun, what are you doing?

Francoise is intent on getting dressed and out of the house as quickly as possible.

FRANCOISE

I need a cigarette.

DON (dumbfounded)

... But... you don't smoke...

FRANCOISE

Yes, I do. I mean, I used to...

DON

When?

FRANCOISE

Before we met.

DON

Twenty years ago?

FRANCOISE

Uh-huh.

DON

You haven't smoked in twenty years but tonight at - what is it? - four o'clock in the morning you need a cigarette?

(beat)

This isn't because of the bonsai tree I bought for our anniversary - is it? If you're pissed at me just tell me, you don't need to rush out and...

FRANCOISE (calmly, smiling)

No, I'm not pissed off. I just need a cigarette.

Francoise comes back over to him and kisses him gently on the forehead.

FRANCOISE

It's very simple, dear: I'm going

out, I'm going to buy a pack of
cigarettes, I'm going to smoke one,
and then I'm going to come back to
bed.

Francoise gets up and heads out. At the doorway she turns
back around.

FRANCOISE
(continuing)
Get some sleep; I'll be right back.

DON
Sure... no problem...

Don just shakes his head as we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. RUSSELL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Judd is in a rather chipper mood but becomes dismayed when he
enters Russell's room and sees Russell still asleep. He
looks at the clock which reads 10:00.

JUDD
Get-up, Slim!

Russell slowly wakes from his deep sleep.

JUDD
(continuing)
We're late.

RUSSELL
Sorry... I must've slept through the
alarm.

JUDD (skeptically)
Uh-huh.

RUSSELL
I was up all night...

JUDD
Don't care.

RUSSELL
... painting. I painted another
woman.

JUDD

Speaking of painting, we're an hour late to paint Ol'-lady-Peyser's house.

RUSSELL

Y'wanna see it?

JUDD

What?

RUSSELL

My painting.

Judd shrugs his shoulders as Russell approaches the easel. Russell lifts the cover and proudly presents his drawing of Françoise.

JUDD (uncaring)

Nice. Who is she?

RUSSELL

I don't know.

JUDD

What-d'ya-mean - "y'don't know"?

RUSSELL

That means, for instance, that I have no idea who she is: I just dreamed her and then painted what I dreamt.

Judd shakes his head skeptically then heads for the door; Russell calls him back.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Look, I painted "Mary" and two weeks later she moved here and walked into Slack Heaven for the first time.

JUDD

And you went out with her?

RUSSELL

Nah, we never went out.

JUDD (proudly)

Good, because after you left she...

RUSSELL

We just boy-girled.

JUDD

What's-that?

RUSSELL

That's like making love but faster,

harder.

JUDD

Come-again...?

RUSSELL

I said, we never went out; we just boy-girled.

JUDD

I don't recall seeing her skinny-ass skdateling out of the apartment nor do I recall any of the traditional bragging rituals that ensue after a night of mating.

RUSSELL

That's because it wasn't a night of mating. I told you, I started kissing her in the parking lot and she freaked-out.

JUDD

You kissed her parking lot?

RUSSELL

No, I told you, I showed her the painting of herself and her blouse was off faster than you can say...
(pork fried rice)

JUDD

"Tofu hoagie..."

RUSSELL

What?

JUDD

That's what I want for lunch. Pick-up a tofu hoagie with yogurt dressing and a celery soda on the way back from getting the paint. Four cans, white lacquer 200, and make sure Mister Jenkins gives you a good price.

RUSSELL

... but then she freaked, told me to get ripped...

JUDD

Great. I'll go to Peyser's and you meet me there in twenty minutes. You can shower later.

RUSSELL

Sure thing, boss...

JUDD

And don't dick around; I've only got
enough paint left to do the side
trim...

RUSSELL

No problem...

Judd starts to exit but turns back around in the doorway.

JUDD

And just remember...

RUSSELL

What...?

JUDD (still deadpan)

It's only funny until somebody loses
an eye.

RUSSELL

Y'better write it down - I'll never
remember.

Judd exits. Russell looks at the painting then takes it down
off of the easel. He quickly puts on his overalls and exits
the apartment carrying the portrait of Francoise.

INT. FRENCH BAKERY - DAY

VICKY (17) prepares some pastries as Francoise enters
carrying a small bonsai tree.

Francoise is wearing a really chic pants and blouse outfit.
The bakery and her clothing exude class and good taste.
Vicky and Francoise act more like sisters than mother and
daughter. Francoise normally speaks to Vicky in French and
Vicky replies in English.

VICKY

Hi, ma...

They kiss each other on the cheeks.

FRANCOISE

Bonjour.

Vicky notices the bonsai tree.

VICKY

What are you doing with that?

FRANCOISE

Je t'ai dit. Je vais le rendre. Je
sais élever les enfants mais pas les
plantes!

(subtitled)

I told you: I'm going to return it.
I know how to raise children but not
plants!

VICKY

Well, I don't think a plant could
take care of the bakery as well as I
do anyways...

FRANCOISE

C'est ce qu'on verra...!

(beat)

Donc tu t'occupes de la patisserie,
s'il te plait. Je reviens dans
trente minute.

(subtitled)

We'll see...

(beat)

Take care of the bakery, please.
I'll be back in half an hour.

EXT. JENKINS' HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Russell pulls up in front of JENKINS' HARDWARE store and get
out of the pick-up truck.

There's a hand-painted sign on the truck that reads

CHEAP GENERIC PAINTING CO.

Russell walks over to the door.

MISTER JENKINS is at the door turning the sign from OPEN to
CLOSED. He blocks Russell from entering the doorway.

RUSSELL

Hey, Mr. Jenkins, what's all this? I
need to get some paint.

JENKINS

Sorry Russell but we're closed for
lunch.

RUSSELL

Closed for lunch - since when?

JENKINS

Since today... new policy.

RUSSELL

But lunch is your busiest time.

JENKINS

That's just it... don't need the
headache anymore.

RUSSELL

C'mon, just open up... I just need four cans of white lacquer; it'll only take a minute.

JENKINS (calmly and confidently)
Nope. I'm an old man and I'll close my store any damn time I please! Y'know, Russell, I never thought you were much of a painter anyways.

RUSSELL
You've never even seen me work!

JENKINS
I know: y'just don't - I dunno - "look" like a painter, at least not like the other painters who come in here.

(beat)
Y'look more like a street vendor or the guy who cleans up the circus when it leaves town or something.

But hey, there's nothing wrong with that. An honest days work is an honest days work... Anyway, the millennium is on the way and I'm gonna be there to watch...

Russell is mesmerized by Jenkins who has obviously gone mad.

JENKINS
(continuing)
The millennium, Russell... No more working lunch hours! Y'hear me?

Russell stands there in disbelief.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Francoise puts the bonsai tree in the passenger seat of her brand new car and gets into the driver's seat. She turns the ignition but the car just sputters.

FRANCOISE
Merde! Mais, qu'est-ce que c'est cet connerie au'jourd'hui?
(subtitled)
Shit! What the hell is going on today?

She turns the ignition again and pumps the gas but nothing happens. All of the lights on the dashboard start flashing furiously. Finally the ignition turns and Francoise puts the car in gear and pulls out of her parking spot.

EXT. COUNTY PAINT SUPPLY STORE - DAY

Russell pulls up to a large paint supply store but it's obviously closed. Russell is livid.

RUSSELL

Shit! What-the-hell-is-going-on-today?

He gets out of the car to read the sign on the store that says

CLOSED FOR INVENTORY

TRY SAM'S HARDWARE IN JOHNSON COUNTY

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Jesus-christmas, Johnson County, Judd's gonna kill me.

Russell fishes in his pocket for a quarter and turns around to the payphone. He picks up the receiver which flies easily into his hand; the cable has been cut. Russell shakes his head in dismay.

EXT. PAINTING WORKSITE/PEYSER'S HOUSE - DAY

Judd finishes pouring the last drops of paint into a bin. He mixes the last bunch of paint around and looks at some of the trim around the house. Then he looks at his watch and flings his paint brush into the paint bin in disgust.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Francoise is talking to the great-looking gas station ATTENDANT who is checking under the hood of her car.

FRANCOISE

I have no idea what the problem is... I mean, I just got the damn thing and it just...

ATTENDANT

Maybe it's the full moon.

FRANCOISE

What?

ATTENDANT

Yeah, the way most crimes occur during the full moon and all the animals in the jungle fornicate... last night was a full moon.

FRANCOISE

It's not the goddamn moon, it's the 'carburetor' or 'transmission' or something... It just...

ATTENDANT

Well, I don't see anything wrong with
it, ma'am...

Francoise gives up and gets back into the car. The Attendant
shuts the hood and walks over to the driver's window.

ATTENDANT

(continuing)

Y'know, normally it's fifty dollars
for emergency service like that.

FRANCOISE

But you didn't do anything!

ATTENDANT

Yes, I did.

(smiling warmly)

I gave you peace of mind.

FRANCOISE

Well then, that's how I'll repay you,
with a piece of my mind!

Francoise starts the car.

ATTENDANT

Well, I'm gonna make an exception
just this once 'cause seeing your
pretty smile makes my hormones go
yippity-yappity... y'know, with the
full moon 'n all...

Frustrated, Francoise closes her eyes tightly wishing that
the Attendant would disappear.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Russell sits in his pick-up on the side of the road. Behind
him is a police car with its sirens going. A POLICEMAN gets
out of the police car and approaches the pick-up.

POLICEMAN

License and registration, son.

RUSSELL

What for?

POLICEMAN

Do you have any idea how fast you
were going?

RUSSELL

Some idea.

POLICEMAN

Well?

RUSSELL (flustered, innocently)
Ah... faster than paint dries...?

POLICEMAN
Very good, that's a very good
response.

The Policeman brushes his hand along the sign on the pick-up.

POLICEMAN
(continuing)
So you're some kinda painter, I-take-
it...?

RUSSELL
Actually, I'm two kinds of painter.

POLICEMAN
How's that work?

RUSSELL
I paint houses during the day and
women during the night.

The Policeman thinks about this while chewing on the earpiece
of his Raybans.

POLICEMAN
Y'know, most people can't see the
whole island; they only see whatever
beach they happen to be sitting on.
And that's the problem with any type
of dogmatism. Y'see?

Russell nods 'yes'.

POLICEMAN (authoritatively)
But I can clearly see that you're not
like that. And just this once, I'm
going to personally absolve you for
speeding.

Russell nods 'thank you' and gets ready to drive off. He
starts the engine and puts the car into gear.

POLICEMAN (out of nowhere)
Sixty-seven.

RUSSELL
Excuse me?

POLICEMAN
Sixty-seven, I said. That's how fast
you were going. In a fifty- five
zone.

RUSSELL

Oh, I'm sorry.

POLICEMAN

It's the year my wife was born.

Russell doesn't know what to say. He just nods stupidly. The Policeman moseys back to his car while chewing on the earpiece from his glasses. Russell rolls up the window and drives off.

RUSSELL (to himself)

What, what is it? Is it my day to meet all the maniacs in town?

(imitating the cop)

"Usually I just fire a couple of warning shots into the back of their heads with my Oswald Special, that always slows 'em down." Jesus-christmas!

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - DAY

The phone rings. CLAIRE VOYANTE (50) concentrates for a second before picking it up. Claire Voyante is a psychic who has an atelier with a small waiting room that separates her room from the street. Claire holds her hand over the phone with her eyes closed before suddenly snatching it up.

CLAIRE (into phone)

Hi Judd!

CUT TO:

INT. PAINTING WORKSITE - DAY

Judd is holding the phone to his ear with amazement.

JUDD

Hi, Claire... just checking.

CLAIRE (off)

I know, Judd... I know.

JUDD

I'll call ya later.

Judd hangs up the phone. He has a look on his face that says, "How does she do that?"

EXT. SAM'S HARDWARE STORE/PARKING LOT - DAY

Russell finishes dialing the number. It's busy.

RUSSELL (to himself)

Goddamnit, Judd. Who the hell are

you talking to?

Russell picks up four cans of paint, two in each hand, and heads back over to the pick-up. He puts two cans down in back of him while he searches in his pocket for the keys to the locked truck door. Suddenly a car barrels around the corner and into the open spot behind Russell next to the pick-up.

There are two loud thuds. BOOM! BOOM!

Russell looks down over his shoulder and sees that the two cans of paint that he put down were crushed by the car. We follow a WOMAN's torso getting out of the car and running around to see what happened.

WOMAN'S POV: PAINT ALL OVER HER NEW CAR

FRANCOISE

What the hell did you do that for?

RUSSELL

Me? You should watch where you're going, lady!

Russell bends down to pick up the remains of his two cans of paint.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

My paint!

Francoise bends down and starts to wipe the wet paint off of her new car.

FRANCOISE

My car!

Russell and Francoise stand-up and finally look at each other, intensely and curiously.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

What are you looking at?

RUSSELL

Don't I know you from somewhere?

Francoise is so infuriated that she smacks Russell in the shoulder.

FRANCOISE

You have some nerve, messing up my car and then trying to pick me up!!
Jesus-christmas!

Russell notices that she curses like he does and looks

bizarrely at her.

RUSSELL

You're French - aren't you?

Francoise looks at him with disgust at this stupid comment. Russell stands up and walks back over to his pick-up.

Francoise continues to rant angrily to herself in French while she uses a rag to wipe the paint off of her car. Russell comes back over and bends down next to her. He holds his painting of her out in front of her.

Francoise doesn't know what to say. She looks intensely at the painting in disbelief. It really does resemble her.

FRANCOISE

Tu travailles vite... you work fast,
I mean.

RUSSELL (awkwardly)

I painted it this morning, around
four o'clock.

FRANCOISE

It can't be me: I don't smoke!

They just stand there looking at each other.

RUSSELL (nervously, after some time)

Can we... get coffee or something?

FRANCOISE

Non... pas du tout!

Francoise gets up quickly and looks in the car. She sees the bonsai tree still sitting there patiently.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Merde!

Francoise rushes around to the other side of the car and gets in. On the dashboard she spots the pack of cigarettes.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Merde! Merde! Merde!

Francoise starts the car and drives off.

Russell takes a step or two after Francoise's car as she drives away. He stands there as if he's watching his whole life pass before his eyes.

RUSSELL

Wait!

Then he throws the two good cans of paint into the pick-up and hops into the driver's seat. He quickly starts the engine and peels out of the parking lot. As he reaches what appears to be the parking lot exit, he spots Francoise's car turning the corner down the road.

Suddenly a car pulls right in front of him and blocks him: it's the POLICEMAN. Both cars screech to a halt inches from each other. Neither Russell nor the Policeman are happy to see each other.

Russell looks up and sees that he's going the wrong way out of the one-way entrance. He forces a dumb innocent smile and shrugs his shoulders to say, "I'm sorry, sir". Although stationary, the Policeman starts flashing his lights as he puts on his hat and angrily steps out of the police car.

INT. PAINTING WORKSITE - DAY

Judd still has the telephone tucked under his chin. He's holding a tiny piece of paper in front of him.

JUDD (into the telephone)
Hi, may I please speak with Mary?
(beat)
(aggressively)
Well, that won't do me much good! Why would I want to speak with her momentarily? Listen:
(silence)
Did y'hear that? That was a "moment". What could I possibly say in a moment?
(beat)
No, that's what it means: "Momentarily" doesn't mean "in a moment", it means "for a moment" - y'get it? Sure, I'll hold.
(Judd frowns)
Is this Mary? Hey, how ya doin'?
(cool)
Yeah, Judd, from last night, Slack Heaven. Yeah, that's it. So, I was thinkin'... how about dinner?
(surprised)
Sure? Really? I'll be there... See ya...

Judd is ecstatic. He hangs up and does the "Boy, am I cool" jig.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Vicky is working hard making pastries and serving customers. The phone rings. Vicky answers it but doesn't stop working with her hands.

VICKY (into telephone)
Hello? Hi Dad, how are you? Good.
No, she went out for a minute. Yeah,
to return the bonsai... No, I liked
it; I thought it was sweet. Sure, as
soon as she gets in. OK, see ya.

Vicky hangs up and finishes what she was doing with the
pastries. Francoise enters in a flurry puffing away on a
cigarette.

VICKY
Hi ma, daddy just called.

Vicky notices the cigarette.

VICKY
(continuing)
Mom? Mom? Are you OK?

FRANCOISE
Sure, why do you ask?

Francoise is busy carrying the bonsai into the bakery.

VICKY
What's with the cigarette? You don't
smoke and... there's no smoking in
here!

Francoise runs over to the door and throws the lighted
cigarette outside. She looks slightly ashamed. It appears
as if this elegant French woman has become a puppet of the
forces in the universe. She is no longer entirely in control
of her actions. Her rationale is out the window and she only
knows she has done something wrong when somebody points it
out to her.

VICKY
(continuing)
What's up, Mom?

FRANCOISE (absentmindedly)
Ca va, ca va... I just have to bring
this goddamn tree inside so it
doesn't melt in the car.

VICKY
I thought you were going to return
it...?

FRANCOISE
Yeah, well...

VICKY
If I had to guess - Maman - I know

this is going to sound crazy but...
it looks like you're having an
affair...

FRANCOISE

Are you completely out of your mind?

VICKY

I mean, you use the tree as a stupid
excuse to disappear for two hours on
trip that should take fifteen
minutes, then you come back in here
smoking a cigarette!

FRANCOISE

You're talking bullshit, dear.

VICKY (smartly)

And you've never spoken to me before
in English!

Francoise reflects on this incontrovertible proof of guilt.

FRANCOISE (embarrassed)

Oh...

VICKY

So what's up with you? Did y'have an
accident or something?

Francoise picks the bonsai tree back up to put it down in its
proper place.

FRANCOISE

Oui, c'est ca. Et ce putain d'arbre,
il me tue!

(subtitled)

Yeah, an accident. And this goddamn
tree is killing me.

VICKY

So what happened?

FRANCOISE

Mais de quoi tu parles?

(subtitled)

What are you talking about?

VICKY

Well, you're just acting - I dunno -
"weird".

Francoise ignores Vicky and looks around to make sure that
everything is just right in the bakery. Francoise notices
that Vicky is just standing there waiting for an answer.

FRANCOISE

Eh... tu veux pas bosser un peu?
(subtitled)
Why don't you get back to work?

VICKY
I'm waiting for the oven to warm up.
Jeez!

EXT. PAINTING WORKSITE - DAY

Russell returns to work and JUDD is waiting to curse him out.

JUDD (play-acting)
"Well, I'll be a monkey's asshole!"

Russell gets out of the pick-up with two cans of paint and no lunch.

JUDD (turning serious)
Hey, where's my lunch?

RUSSELL
Didn't have time...

JUDD
What-the-fuck-d'ya-mean - "no time"?

Russell holds out the moving violation ticket hoping that it'll exact pity.

RUSSELL (to himself)
I got a ticket too from some maniac-
cop for goin' out an entrance...
sixty-five samolians...

Judd rips the ticket from Russell's hand, glances at it, and throws it to the ground.

JUDD
I send you out on a ten minute errand
and you come back two hours late,
without my lunch, shy two gallons of
paint, and out sixty-five big ones?

RUSSELL
Yeah, well...

JUDD
So...?

RUSSELL
So, what?

JUDD
You got some kinda excuse or
something?

Russell sighs, then smiles.

RUSSELL (excited)

I met her!

JUDD

Oh no, not again...

(Judd explodes)

Youra irresponsible asshole, Russell!
And... YOU'RE FIRED!

RUSSELL

What?

JUDD

You come late to work, I give you one
little thing to do and you fuck- it-
up!

RUSSELL

It's not my fault!

JUDD

Well, then whose fault is it - the
Pope's?

(beat)

You ain't no goddamn painter anyway!

RUSSELL

Well, neither are you! You're just
some half-assed philosopher-actor
trying to pay the rent!

JUDD

Yeah, well...

RUSSELL

Remember that time I insisted we
refuse that job when we really needed
the money? I knew - I could feel -
that that totally suave guy -
whathisname - was trouble and the
next day he gets blown away in his
own bathroom by five guys with uzis...

JUDD

Yes, Uri Geller is definitely "in the
house"! Go ahead, just go ahead:
tell me the "forces in the world"
story one more time, daddy... please!

Russell looks like he's going to explode; he wants to say
"Fuck you", but he just clenches his teeth. Instead he
starts to open the two cans of paint and pour them into bins.
Judd just stands there waiting. After a moment, Russell
stops playing with the paint and speaks to Judd.

RUSSELL

So am I fired - or what?

JUDD

How can I fire you - we're partners?

(beat)

Y'know Russell, you're my best friend
but you're still an asshole and
that's no reflection on me.

Russell and Judd smile at each other and shake hands.

JUDD

(continuing)

So, what's she like?

RUSSELL

Awh, man, y'gotta see her... she's
a little older than us, I think, and
she's French, but...

JUDD

French - eh? So when do I meet her?

RUSSELL

Well, we didn't get a chance to
exchange numbers...

Judd is about to start painting when he gets an idea and
stops.

JUDD

Y'know what?

RUSSELL

What?

JUDD

You need to see Claire.

RUSSELL

Wait-a-second: you don't believe in
my whatever-you-call-it "abilities"
but you want me to see some houka-
bead lady?

JUDD

Claire Voyante's more like a
psychologist, except she looks at the
future instead of the past. Listen,
you already fucked-up this job: I'll
finish the two cans of paint and you
go see Claire.

(joking, he closes
his eyes and
concentrates)

"She's waiting for you... I can feel

it."

RUSSELL

Well...

JUDD

Get outta here!

EXT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE/POOL - DAY

Francoise is sitting out by the pool. She's smoking a cigarette and staring at the cabana and deeply into herself. Francoise sensually inhales a deep breath of smoke and then slowly lets it out. She hears the car pull up, frowns at the cigarette and puts it out.

DON (off)

Hi, luv, I'm home!

She stands up and straighten-up her exquisite French outfit.

FRANCOISE

Hi, honey, I'm back here...

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER/WAITING ROOM - DAY

Russell is sitting in Claire Voyante's waiting room. He can hear everything that she's saying and he's disturbed by it. He pretends to try to read a magazine.

CLAIRE (off)

Yes, I see it on everyone. Right in the lifeline of all people born after World War II; there's a crack that corresponds with the years 1998 and 1999. I can't be more precise than that. Nuclear war, the wrath of the gods, some kind of disaster... but worse than you could ever imagine. Yes, an apocalypse. It's as if the world is going to be put on hold. Yes, you can quote me on that. Read Nostradamus, read Revelations, it's all there... OK, bye.

Claire hangs up the phone.

CLAIRE (enthusiastically)

C'mon in, Russell!

Russell goes into her room and sits down. Claire concentrates for a second and then looks intensely at him.

CLAIRE (proudly)

You have it too - don't you?

RUSSELL

Have what, will it go away?

CLAIRE

You have it, I can see it in your aura; you're a medium...

RUSSELL (playing along)

Actually, I'm a "large"!

CLAIRE

Very good! Very good! All mediums should have a sense of humor! I'm going to remember that one!

RUSSELL

So, if I know so much, why did I come to see you?

CLAIRE

You don't know so much. Only Claire Voyante knows so much. You know "much", but that's not so bad - now is it?

RUSSELL

I dunno... sometimes I don't think I know anything.

CLAIRE

OK, well you just let me rest my eyes a moment and... just talk.

RUSSELL

Well, there are these women. And sometimes - two or three times a year - I dream about them, then I get up and I paint pictures of them. Always during the night. And then we meet. And we fall in love. For ten minutes. And then she leaves like a bat outta hell...

Claire is still out.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Hello? Claire...?

CLAIRE

Show me the painting.

Russell shows Claire the painting he made of Francoise.

CLAIRE (excited)

Oh! Remarkable! Yes, yes, yes! This woman will be very important in your life! She is going to teach you one

of the most important lessons that
you will ever learn!

RUSSELL

True love - right?

CLAIRE

I can't say... but it will be very
very difficult for you to meet her.

RUSSELL (hesitantly)

Ah... I kinda bumped into her this
afternoon.

CLAIRE

But you didn't get her phone
number - did you?

Russell nods 'no'. Claire is proud of herself.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

You must search far and long. You
may have to travel to see her again.
But never get discouraged. She has
many things to tell you. Look and
look and look, but never give up. I
promise you, at the end of the day,
you will find this woman and she will
change the way you think and feel!

RUSSELL

But... what...

CLAIRE

Calm down, calm down... Give me your
hand.

Russell gives Claire his hand.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

Ah yes, yes, of course. You haven't
been with anyone in a long time -
have you? Just like all my little
angels, Russell, you need so much to
be loved...

(beat)

... cheap sex buys you so little -
right?

RUSSELL

Well... cheap sex is better than no
sex...

CLAIRE (zealously)

No it isn't, because it dirties your

soul!

Claire shakes her head with disappointment and looks deep into Russell's eyes. Then she concentrates on his palm.

CLAIRE (reading his palm)
You will live a long time, Russell,
and you will help many people... and
you will pay me twenty dollars!

Claire dramatically lets go of Russell's hand. Russell doesn't know what to say; he hesitates then reaches into his pocket and pulls out some crumpled bills.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - EVENING

Don, Francoise, and Vicky sit down to dinner. There are candles on the table and they are set to have their usual gourmet dinner. Francoise looks spectacular in her high-fashion outfit. She is oblivious to the tension between Don and her. On the counter next to them is Francoise's packet of cigarettes; Don looks over at them.

DON
So do you want to talk about it?

FRANCOISE
Talk about what?

DON
What happened last night?

FRANCOISE
Why - what happened last night?
Vicky, passe-moi la sauce, s'il te
plait.

(subtitled)
Vicky, could you pass the dressing,
please?

Vicky passes the dressing, trying to be invisible.

VICKY
Here, Mom...

DON
Last night at four o'clock in the
morning my loving wife burst out of
bed, went down to the local 7-11 and
purchased a packet of cigarettes like
some schoolgirl trying to... I
dunno... what the hell is going on?

Francoise innocently shrugs her shoulders.

DON
(continuing)

Vicky, do you consider that normal behavior for a grown woman?

VICKY

I don't want to get involved, Dad... Everyone's allowed to freak-out once in a while...

FRANCOISE

Mais j'ai pas "freaked-out"; j'avais besoin de fumer, c'est tout.

(subtitled)

I didn't freak out; I just needed a cigarette.

DON

I mean, when was the last time you smoked? Or have you been smoking behind my back the whole time?

FRANCOISE

I dunno... I mean, you asked me to stop when you finished medical school so stopped. And then I had Vicky so it was not possible to smoke, but then last night - I dunno, I just needed a cigarette...

DON

At four o'clock in the morning?

FRANCOISE

Whatever time it was, dear, I don't know...

Vicky forces a smile at DON who just shakes his head in dismay.

Francoise looks up at them and smiles innocently.

INT. RUSSELL'S ROOM - EVENING

Russell strips down to his boxers and sits on the edge of his bed thinking. He gets up and puts his painting of Francoise back on the easel and regards it carefully. He starts to touch her body; he squints looking hard at the painting.

Something is wrong.

He starts to erase/smear the upper section of her legs. Judd enters and breaks Russell's concentration.

JUDD

What's up, what are you doing tonight?

RUSSELL

I'm hangin'... You?

JUDD

I've got a dinner.

RUSSELL

What d'ya mean?

JUDD

That's when you go to a restaurant and eat, but that's not important now.

RUSSELL

I know what a dinner is, asshole. What happened to Salvador Deli, Slack Heaven, and a quick wank?

JUDD

Mary.

RUSSELL

Jesus-christmas, you're actually going to go on a date with that...

JUDD

Just because she didn't let you poke her doesn't make her a whatever-you-were-gonna-call-her. Anyway, the Peyser's house bright 'n early tomorrow - so get some sleep tonight. We only have another two days there.

Russell nods with disapproval as Judd exits. Russell turns back to his painting of Françoise. He starts to erase the upper portion of her legs again. Suddenly Judd burst back in the room.

JUDD

(continuing)

I almost forgot: what'd Claire say?

Russell looks at his painting of Françoise.

RUSSELL

She said that this is it, she's the one.

JUDD

The one what?

RUSSELL

She's mine, the love of my life...

JUDD

And what about Donna, Mary, and that chick with the mustache?

RUSSELL

Just practice.
(pointing at the
painting)
This is the one.

JUDD (sarcastically)
Congratulations. I'll alert the
media.

Judd frowns and ducks out. Russell looks at the painting and gets an idea; he goes over to a dresser draw. He opens it and takes out a kit of colored crayons. He sits back down at the easel and begins to color in large patterns on Francoise's dress. He's now even more excited about the painting and again starts to sweat, appearing to be possessed, painting as quickly and passionately as possible in order to translate the image in his mind onto paper.

After a few minutes he starts to slow down and look at what he has done. We see the detailed portrait of Francoise smoking and wearing a dress that doesn't exude the usual class and good taste that she does. In fact, she looks more like a doll than a sophisticated woman.

We stay on the portrait as we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. RUSSELL & JUDD'S BATHROOM/LIVINGROOM - DAY

Russell finishes his shower and reaches over to the towel rack for a towel. He reaches around but doesn't find anything.

He wipes the water and shampoo from his eyes then opens them.

He looks curiously at the empty towel rack. He yells out the bathroom door.

RUSSELL
Holmes - you finally decided to do
the laundry? Where're the towels?

Russell waits for a response but there isn't one. He inches his way out of the bathroom holding a soggy washcloth over his soggy willy. He walks through the livingroom towards the kitchen.

RUSSELL
(continuing)
Where're the towels?

Still no response.

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Russell enters the kitchen. There are only two chairs in the kitchen and this morning they are both occupied: one by Judd, the other by... Mary.

Russell stops dead in his tracks: he is not happy.

Mary is wearing Russell's towel around her butt-naked body. Judd is wearing his own towel around his waste and nothing else. Judd and Mary are romantically feeding each other Fruit Loops as if they were the last people left on earth. Russell backs up and pops just his wet head around the doorway so they can't see his wet naked body.

He interrupts their kissing and petting by clearing his throat. Finally, he gets their attention. Judd notices that he and Mary are no longer alone.

JUDD (all smiles)

What's happening?

RUSSELL

Towel. I'd like my towel back, please...

JUDD

You don't say, "Good Morning?"

Russell looks at Mary and fakes a smile.

RUSSELL

Mornin'...

(frustrated)

Towel. Now.

Mary non-nonchalantly stands up and hands the towel to Russell.

Judd and Russell both stand there in amazement staring at Mary's beautiful sensuous body (PG-13).

Russell grabs it from her and she sits down to continue her intellectual discussion with Judd who couldn't be happier. He finally shouts out to Russell who is skdateling his naked ass back into the bathroom.

JUDD

I'm gonna be a little late today, so start on the back of Peyser's house and I'll be there by lunch - OK?

Judd and Mary's mouths meet again as they start to caress each other and fall to the kitchen floor.

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Russell re-enters the bathroom and wipes the towel over his head and body. He looks with disgust in the mirror about having to deal with Mary and Judd.

INT. BAKERY - MORNING

Vicky is putting pastries into the oven and preparing the counter display when she hears the back door open. She calls out without looking up.

VICKY

Hi, Mom...

FRANCOISE (off)

Bonjour, ma cherie!

Vicky heads towards the back smiling joyously. Suddenly her face drops as if she just witnessed a murder.

FRANCOISE

Mom?

We see Françoise looking more like a sixteen year-old girl than a sophisticated businesswoman. She's smoking (again) and wearing a loud print dress just like the one RUSSELL painted. Again she is oblivious to the fact that anything is wrong or different.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Bonjour, comment ca va?

Françoise just stands there innocently smiling. Vicky doesn't know what to say.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Ca va pas?

VICKY

Mom...

FRANCOISE

Oui...?

VICKY

Nice dress, Mom... I mean, Jesus, I haven't see that one in a long time!

FRANCOISE

Isn't it great? I found it in the closet. It must be twenty years old!

VICKY

Yeah, but Mom, all the customers are used to you being so "refined"

"cultured"... what are they going to think when they see you like that?

Vicky notices the smoking cigarette.

VICKY

(continuing)

And put that goddamn cigarette out! There is no smoking in here! I don't know how many times I've seen you ask people not to smoke in here and now...

FRANCOISE (smiling)

Yes, darling...

Francoise puts the cigarette out.

VICKY

Mom, what is up with you?

Francoise just stands there waiting for Vicky to elaborate. Vicky, however, gets fed-up.

VICKY

(continuing)

Mom, why don't you take the day off?

FRANCOISE

Excuse-moi, qu'est-ce t'as dit?

(subtitled)

Excuse me, what did you say?

VICKY

I said, take the day off, go shopping, go to the park, hang-out... you must be working too hard lately...

FRANCOISE

You know, I think you're right.

(beat)

I'm going to return the bonsai tree and then I'm going to buy a whole new bunch of clothing...

VICKY

What d'ya mean? You look so great in your clothing?

FRANCOISE

Where do we go when we take you shopping? The Gap - right?

VICKY

Mom, you hate the Gap! Remember? You complained every time, you said I dressed like a smurf!

Francoise thinks for a moment: did she actually say this?

VICKY

(continuing)

Mom, people come in here from all-over just to see the exquisitely dressed French woman and look at the exquisite pastries... I mean, what would people say if they came in and saw you looking like Farmer Joe or... this!?

FRANCOISE

It's on Main Street, right after the stationary store - right?

VICKY

Yeah, but... Ma...

Francoise leans over and kisses Vicky on the cheeks.

FRANCOISE

I'll be back right before closing time - OK?

VICKY

Mom...!

Vicky just watches in amazement as Francoise exits.

INT. CAR/EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Russell is cruising around slowly; he's looking for Francoise's car. He thinks he sees it and pulls over. He's about to shout out of the window when he looks into the drivers seat and sees a large MALE NURSE, not Francoise. Russell continues to drive around looking at cars. Finally he gets fed-up and pulls into the parking lot of Claire Voyante.

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - DAY

Russell enters.

CLAIRE (off)

Hi, Russell!

Russell can't see her and wonders if she was just guessing or someway saw him come in. He enters her main room.

RUSSELL

Hi, Claire. Listen, y'gotta give me a clue... I mean, how can I find her?

CLAIRE

Have you ever heard that "there's

more in the chase than the catch",
Russell?

RUSSELL

Yeah, but we know that's not the case here because you said that she was going to be the most important woman in my life.

CLAIRE (smiling)

I don't want to deprive you of any pleasures you might gain while tracking her down: men love that type of hunting-gathering-stuff...

RUSSELL

There's no pleasure, Claire. I'm just frustrated, I wanna break things, knowing that she's out there somewhere and that she's mine but I don't know how to get in touch with her.

CLAIRE

Everything happens for a reason, Russell. You'll find her when you're meant to find her.

RUSSELL

What-the-hell-does-that-mean?

CLAIRE

It means that you should go to work. You're late.

RUSSELL

Yeah, well... thanks anyways.

Frustrated, Russell exits.

EXT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - DAY

Russell exits Claire's and just as he opens the door to the pick-up truck a car barrels into the open spot next to him. RUSSELL flies around as if he's having deja-vu and it's Francoise's car. In the car Judd is making googly eyes at Mary. Judd catches something out of the corner of his eye and does a doubletake. He spots Russell.

JUDD

What-the-hell?

Judd bounces out of Mary's car quickly and confronts Russell.

JUDD

(continuing)

What-the-hell-are-you-doing-here?

RUSSELL

Me? What the hell are you doing here?

JUDD

No, really, I always take a personal interest when my partner tries to cheat me out of my morning off, partner!

RUSSELL

I wouldn't take that road if I were you!

JUDD

What did you say?

RUSSELL

I said that I ain't cheatin' noone outta nothing. I'm going to work now, I just had to make a quick stop!

JUDD

Old-lady Peyser ain't gonna pay us if we don't finish by tomorrow, she's having some kinda reception or something...

RUSSELL

Listen: right now finding this woman is priority number one in my life so you take care of your business

(Russell points at
Mary)

and I'll take care of mine!

JUDD

Yeah, but our business is painting and if the trim on Peyser's house ain't done soon you won't have two nickels to rub together to woo Cinderella, Grumpy!

RUSSELL

Y'don't need money for true love!

JUDD

Yeah, but y'need it to eat!

Again Russell yearns to say 'fuck you' but instead just clenches his teeth, gets into the pick-up and takes off. Judd turns back to Mary and takes her hand as they head towards Claire Voyante's.

MARY

You shouldn't be so hard on him...

JUDD

I dunno, he's been acting really weird lately. Even for Russell.

MARY

Well, we should be thankful for one thing:

JUDD

What's that?

MARY

If it weren't for Russell we would've never met.

Judd reconsiders, he knows that Mary is right.

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - DAY

Judd and Mary enter Claire Voyante's.

CLAIRE (off)

My lovebirds! Come in!

JUDD

Hi, Claire!

Judd and Mary shake her hand then sit down in front of her.

CLAIRE

You'll never guess who was just in here - what a coincidence!

Judd grimaces.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

So what can I do for you today?

JUDD

Well, one night a couple of months ago Russell painted a picture and kinda looked a little like Mary here.

(beat)

Anyway, they met and spent some quality time together...

MARY

About eight or nine minutes...

JUDD

But it didn't work out... and then we met two nights ago and we both have the same tattoo...

CLAIRE (speaking to the heavens)

The mark of the beast!

JUDD

... which is kinda strange - exact same tattoo, so...

CLAIRE

You came here because...

JUDD

Right. We'd like your professional opinion.

CLAIRE

I think what we need today are the... tarot cards! Voila!

CLAIRE

(continuing; to Mary)

Shuffle them.

INT. CAR - DAY

Russell drives slowly back to work still scoping the landscape for Françoise or her car. Russell looks down at his gas gauge and sees that he's on empty.

RUSSELL

Shit!

Russell sees a gas station and pulls into it and up to the closest pumps.

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - DAY

Claire lays out the cards while Judd and Mary sit anxiously. Claire picks daintily with her finger at various cards. Sometimes she squints, sometimes she smiles. She's really taking a lot of time looking over these goddamn cards. Suddenly, she sweeps her hands across the table and wipes all of the cards into one neat pile.

She sits back and then her face breaks into a tremendous smile.

CLAIRE

Well, it's obvious.

Judd and Mary have no idea what she's talking about.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

Congratulations!

JUDD and MARY together

What, what, what?

CLAIRE

You're getting married!

Judd and Mary sit there in shock.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Russell gets out of the pick-up as the ATTENDANT approaches him. Around the corner of the same gas station is another set of gas pumps.

RUSSELL (to the attendant)

Five bucks, please. Hey, is there a phone here?

ATTENDANT

Sure, around the side.

Russell goes around the side of the building. The Attendant puts the nozzle into Russell's car. But then he notices something on the other side of the gas station and totally freaks out.

ATTENDANT (screaming)

Hey! Lady! Stop that!

CLOSE ON Francoise's innocent face with a cigarette dangling out of her mouth. She stands up from putting the nozzle into the tank.

The Attendant rushes up to her. He points at the huge NO SMOKING sign on the pumps.

ATTENDANT

Hey, y'got some kinda deathwish or something, lady?

FRANCOISE

What..?

The Attendant points to her cigarette.

ATTENDANT

Fire, gasoline - a bad combination.

Francoise tries to comprehend this. Francoise looks at the pump, hands some money to the Attendant and gets into the car.

FRANCOISE

Don't be so paranoid...

The Attendant just stands there dumbfounded as he watches Francoise drive off.

CUT TO:

EXT. TELEPHONE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GAS STATION - DAY

Russell is on the phone.

RUSSELL

There's gotta be some way of tracking her down... I mean, how many silver Acura's can there be in town?

(beat)

No, I did not watch both "Starsky and Hutch" and "Adam 12" last night!

Russell angrily slams down the phone and digs in his pocket for another quarter. He picks up the phone and dials 411.

RUSSELL (into phone)

Hi, I'm looking for a French uh... looking for something "French" today...

(beat)

That's very kind of you, ma'am, but it's not "French Fries". Like a restaurant or coffee shop or somethin'...

(beat)

Wait-a-second, wait-a-second...

Russell digs into his pocket for a pen and a scrap of paper to write on.

RUSSELL

OK... OK... Uh-huh... that's it? OK, great. Thanks.

Russell hangs up and smiles; he heads back over to his car. The Attendant meets him there and Russell hands him a five.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Thanks, man...

ATTENDANT

Take care...

The Attendant watches Russell get into the pick-up and drive off.

EXT. GAP - DAY

Judd and Mary cross paths with Françoise who is bouncing into the GAP. They don't notice her and she doesn't notice them. Françoise puts out her cigarette under her heel as she hits the last stair before the doorway. Judd and Mary are walking arm-in-arm and couldn't be happier.

MARY

Wait, let's say "hi" to Julie!

JUDD

Sure. Where is she?

MARY

Back there at the Gap.

JUDD

First let's do what we came here
for...

Judd and Mary continue down a few shops and stop in front of a jewelry store window. Judd points out some rings. Mary smiles widely.

INT. GAP - DAY

Francoise enters the Gap and Julie greets her.

JULIE

Hi, what can I help you with today?

FRANCOISE

I'd like to buy some dresses,
something with flavor, like a nice
color: orange, mauve, yellow...

JULIE

Well, we only have earth-tones now.

FRANCOISE

But I passed by last week and the
window was full of pretty dresses.

JULIE

For summer. Now it's the fall season.

FRANCOISE

Great, that means that all the summer
stuff is on a sale rack back there
somewhere - right?

JULIE

No, we sent it all to our South
American stores last week - they have
summer when we have winter - y'know?
But we have these great "earth-tones"
in now.

FRANCOISE

Why would I want to look like dirt?

They stand there looking at each other intensely. For apparently no reason there is a vast amount of tension between them. Francoise begins to back out of the store.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Bon, alors, beh... je m'en vais...
merci... merci bien... ciao...

(subtitled)

Well then, that's it, I'm outta here.

Just as Francoise exits, Judd and Mary enter. Still gaping, Julie spots them but can't take her eyes off of Francoise exiting.

MARY

Hi!

Mary notices that something is wrong.

MARY

(continuing)

Hey, what's up?

JULIE

Nothin'... just that woman... she
seemed high or something...

MARY

What d'ya mean "high"? Like drunk?

JULIE

No, I dunno - just "high"?

Mary holds out her hand and displays her ring.

MARY

You mean "high" like me?

JULIE

What's that?

Julie looks over and notices Judd... and his engagement ring.

JUDD

How's it goin'?

JULIE

Hi...

(to Mary)

Excuse me, can I see you for a second?

Mary nods to Judd "it's alright" and heads towards the corner with Julie as if they were two basketball referees deciding a call.

JULIE

(continuing)

What's up?

MARY

We made love all night and it was
amazing.

Julie thinks for a moment about the ramifications of such a statement.

JULIE
Better than Sid?

MARY
Much better. Not even in the same ballpark.

Julie's eyes widen. She takes a deep breath and walks sternly back over to Judd.

JULIE
You have my approval.

JUDD (queerly)
Thanks...

JULIE
But if she sheds one tear - one - because of your slacker-ass, I will systematically hunt you down and kill you. Do you understand?

Judd's mouth drops; he's shocked.

JULIE
(continuing)
Understand?

JUDD
Yes... I understand.

Julie turns to Mary.

JULIE
Well, there's not much to say if you think he's better than Sid...

MARY
Much better...

JULIE
Then we should get some drinks, celebrate...

Mary smiles as Julie and her head for the exit arm-in-arm. Mary stops and turns back.

MARY
Coming, luv?

JUDD
Sure...
(beat)

Wait, who's "Sid"?

EXT. FRENCH CLEANERS - DAY

Russell pulls up and gets out of the car carrying the portrait of Françoise. He's a man on a mission.

INT. FRENCH CLEANERS - DAY

Russell enters carrying the painting and approaches the stubby bald CLEANER (55).

CLEANER

What can I do for you? Picking up for someone?

RUSSELL

Nah, I'm looking for ah... a French woman... and she looks something like this.

Russell holds up his painting. The Cleaner looks at the painting then out the window and around the store.

CLEANER

What - is this Candid Camera or something?

RUSSELL

No, she's the love of my life - I just have to find her. You got a sister?

CLEANER

Two, but they won't do you much good.

RUSSELL

Why not?

CLEANER

Because they're not French.

RUSSELL

How come they're not French but you are?

CLEANER

Who said I was French? I'm from Brooklyn.

RUSSELL

Then how come it's a "French" cleaners?

CLEANER

It's a style... but that kind of information only matters to people

who wear shirts with buttons!

RUSSELL

Yeah, well, at least I'm not pretending to be something I'm not, Frenchy!

CLEANER

You don't have to pretend because you're already a lunatic! Now get your painting and your ass out of my store before I call the cops!

Russell shakes his head in dismay and exits.

EXT. ROLLERBLADE STORE/PARK - DAY

Still smoking and wearing her loud dress, Francoise exits a Rollerblade Store that is across from a park. She stumbles wildly but is having a great time trying to get the hang of blading. She heads for the road and looks both ways before crossing. A SALESCLERK exits the store.

SALESCLERK

Hey watch out! Wait for the light!

Francoise just shakes her head and smiles as she effortlessly skates backwards across the intersection. The Salesclerk's eyes widen in disbelief as some cars careen past. Francoise glides into the park like any other school girl.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

As frantically as usual, Russell enters the bakery carrying the portrait of Francoise. Vicky is giving change to another CUSTOMER who exits.

VICKY

Hi, can I help you?

RUSSELL

I'm looking for a French woman.

VICKY

I'm half French, but my mom is French. 100%. What's it for? Did she win something?

RUSSELL

No, it can't be your mom, your mom's gotta be too old.

Russell looks down at the painting but doesn't show it to Vicky.

VICKY

What's it for? Whatcha got there?

RUSSELL

Wait a second: how old are you?

VICKY

Is this for like some kinda TV show or something?

RUSSELL

Yeah, Sixty Minutes, I work for Sixty Minutes. And we're doing a story on French women who live in shit towns like this one...

VICKY

What are you - on drugs? Get the hell outta here or I'll call the police! You don't work for Sixty Minutes! Get out now, you lunatic!

Russell shakes his head in dismay again as he flees Vicky's wrath.

INT. SLACK HEAVEN - EVENING

Disheartened, Russell enters Slack Heaven. As soon as he hits the bar Jimmy plops down a beer in front of him.

RUSSELL

Thanks. Y'seen Judd today?

JIMMY

Not today, but I'm sure he'll be in later. Is that what you're depressed about?

RUSSELL

I'm not depressed, I'm just thinking...

JIMMY

I've seen people thinking before and they don't look like you. You, y'look "depressed".

RUSSELL

Listen, I'm heading upstairs. I'll come down later if I can't sleep...

JIMMY

Y'know what I always do when I'm depressed, Russell?

RUSSELL

I'm not freakin' depressed, Jimmy, Jesus-christmas!

(beat)

How much do I owe you?

Jimmy looks around to see if anyone is watching.

JIMMY

Go on, get outta here.

Russell sighs with relief; he can always count on Jimmy.

RUSSELL

In addition to being a gentleman and a scholar, you're also a saint, Jimmy...

JIMMY (whispering)

That's why you're going home alone tonight and I'm not.

RUSSELL (in disbelief)

Oh yeah?

(beat)

So go ahead, tell me, Romeo: which one?

Jimmy squints as he peers around the room looking at all of the female faces in the bar one by one. All of a sudden, we hear a circus bell chime "Winner" in Jimmy's head.

JIMMY

That one, over there. Be a little discreet, my man.

RUSSELL

Which one?

JIMMY

Center table, jeans, blue shirt...

RUSSELL

"Blouse", bonehead.

JIMMY

I don't care what you call it cause it's not going to be on for long.

RUSSELL

She's with that guy, y'moron.

JIMMY

She's not interested in him. She's interested in me. And that's who she'll be leaving with.

RUSSELL

You should've quit while you were ahead: you're aces with the discount for alcoholics but you're gonna come

up zeros on the chickee.

JIMMY

If you had any money, I'd bet you...

RUSSELL

You're goin' home with Mister Hand tonight, Jimmy, just like everyone else in this godforsaken place...

Russell waves goodbye with a big open hand. Jimmy just stands there smiling confidently as Russell exits. The Girl from the table looks at Jimmy, gets up and saunters over to the bar.

GIRL

Two shots of tequila, please, James...

JIMMY

I thought he doesn't drink?

GIRL

You know my brother doesn't drink. The second one is for you!

INT. RUSSELL AND Judd's APARTMENT/LIVINGROOM - EVENING

Despondent, Russell enters, flops down the sofa and stares at the ceiling. He reaches over and hits the answering machine.

FRANCOISE (off) (a little nervous)

Hello, my name is Mrs. Franklin.

(beat)

I'm the one who crushed your paint...
I got your number off of the truck.
I was wondering if you could come-by tomorrow, 1235 Riverside Drive... we have a cabana that I'd like you to look at... it needs to be painted...

Russell jumps up ecstatically as the answering machine shuts off and rushes out the door.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Francoise and Don are eating dinner in silence.

DON

What time will Vicky be home?

FRANCOISE

She said she'll be home after she drops off the leftovers at the Salvation Army...

There's more awkward silence as Don and Francoise continue to pick at their food.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Y'know, I was thinking, the only thing that we haven't done around here is paint the cabana - don't you think it's strange that we forgot all about it?

DON

Guess so...

FRANCOISE

So what do you think?

DON

About what?

FRANCOISE

About painting the cabana.

Don is surprised at Francoise's whim.

FRANCOISE (after some time)

Well, is it OK? If we paint the cabana.

DON

Sure, next weekend. We'll get Vicky and some of her friends to come over and...

FRANCOISE

No, I mean pay someone to paint it.

DON

What for?

FRANCOISE

We've already done so much work around here. Let's just let someone else do it - OK?

DON

It's not a question of money. I just like it when we work together, you know, as a family.

FRANCOISE

I know, I just don't feel like painting.

Don sees that there's no point in arguing; he just shakes his head.

DON

This doesn't have anything to do with

your smoking - does it?

FRANCOISE

Don't be silly, dear...

EXT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Russell rides his mountain bike down the street as he squints at house numbers. He's wearing the requisite biking helmet and looks kinda ridiculous. He glances at a piece of paper in his hand. He spots 1235 and jumps/falls off of the bike letting it drop to the ground. His eyes are glued to the lighted window. Through the window he spots Francoise piling dishes into the sink. He just stands there blissfully staring at the love of his life as the sun sets and we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE - DAY

We follow Don and then Vicky as they drive out of the driveway and go to work. Vicky honks to give a final wave to Don as he pulls left out of the driveway and she pulls right.

Russell is lying asleep in the bushes at near the end of the driveway. He is abruptly awakened by the car horn. He wakes up and looks at the house.

INT. CABANA - DAY

Francoise is mulling around the cabana. She's being sentimental, looking at various objects, picking them up and thinking about how the family used them. She touches some skis, then a beach blanket.

The door creaks slowly open and Russell peeks his head/helmet in. He's pretty nervous and he looks absolutely ridiculous in yesterday's clothes and his biking helmet. Francoise turns around; she's also pretty nervous also but still looks like an angel in her horrible print dress. She lets her cigarette drop to the floor and puts it out with her heel.

FRANCOISE (after some time)

Je sais pas pourquoi, mais il y a
quelque chose entre nous. Je n'ai
jamais trompe mon mari, mais tout
d'un coup - je ne peux pas
l'expliquer - j'ai tres envie de toi.

(subtitled)

I don't know why, but there is
something between us. I've never
cheated on my husband, but all of a
sudden - I can't explain it - I
really want you.

RUSSELL (awkwardly)
I don't speak French, ma'am, but we
charge by the room not by the
paint - if that's what you're
asking...

They just stand there staring at each other. Then they take small cautious steps towards each other. They stop just a few inches away from each other. They look like two sixteen year-old virgins who don't have the first clue about making love. Their lips meet softly and then they start to kiss passionately. Russell touches her face and inadvertently brushes his own face which is covered by the helmet straps.

RUSSELL
Oh shit...

Russell undoes the helmet, takes it off and shakes out his hair awkwardly. He looks at Francoise then smiles.

RUSSELL
(continuing)
Wait a minute.

Russell drops the helmet and rushes out of the cabana.

We hear a huge SPLASH!

Francoise rushes to the door but is almost bowled over by Russell who re-enters sopping wet. But clean. Francoise laughs. Russell kisses her. Within seconds they're embraced like long lost lovers.

INT. BANANA REPUBLIC - DAY

Judd enters and spots Mary helping a customer. He non-nchalantly picks a skirt off the rack and heads towards her. Mary doesn't see him.

JUDD (disguising his voice)
"Special delivery, ma'am"...

MARY
Back over there, next to the dressing
room...

Mary does a doubletake when she sees Judd.

MARY (to the customer)
Uh... would you excuse me a moment,
please, ma'am...

The Customer nods and continues to regard some clothing. Judd casually enters the dressing room instead of the storage room. Mary opens the door to the dressing room and jumps into Judd's arms. They kiss wildly. Judd sticks his hand deep in his pocket but comes up empty.

JUDD (whispering)
Wait, do you have any condoms?

MARY
What - you only bought a dozen
yesterday?

Judd steps back, squint, puts his hand to his imaginary
holster and does his best Clint Eastwood impersonation:

JUDD
"A man has got to know his
limitations..."

MARY
I'll rustle one up, "Clint"!

They jump back into each others arms as we...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CABANA - DAY

Francoise and Russell are lying happily in each other's arms.
Russell sees that Francoise is thinking about something.

RUSSELL
What? What is it?

FRANCOISE (emotionally)
I dunno... I just never did anything
like that.

I've been married, forever. And
everything is good. We don't have any
problems. But all of a sudden, I - I
dunno - have this feeling like I've
never lived, like I'm just walking
through life - hypnotized - like I've
become numb...

(beat)
And... and... I don't even know your
name!

RUSSELL
Russell...

FRANCOISE
Nice to meet you.

FRANCOISE
(continuing)
Francoise.

RUSSELL
Pleasure.

FRANCOISE

Let's go into the house... I need
some coffee... and a cigarette.

EXT. CABANA - DAY

Francoise composes herself before as she opens the cabana door to show herself to the world. In his sopping wet clothing Russell follows Francoise out of the cabana and towards the house. Francoise lights a cigarette.

RUSSELL

Hey, I thought you said you didn't
smoke?

They walk outside along the pool; they head for the house.

FRANCOISE

I don't smoke... I mean, Don asked me
to stop smoking when he was in
medical school. He's a doctor so it
just doesn't look right having this
wife puffing away like a chimney.
But, y'know - and I don't feel bad
because he asked me to stop - but
there are just certain times when a
cigarette would be perfect.

Russell wrings out his shirt and then presses it back down against his chest. They reach the door and FRANCOISE holds it open for RUSSELL. She looks around to make sure that nobody saw them.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Russell sits down at the kitchen table and looks around. Francoise pours two cups of coffee and takes great pleasure in he first sip along with a puff from her cigarette.

RUSSELL

So, what d'ya think it is, between us?

FRANCOISE

I don't know, I can't explain it. But
as soon as I got home the other day,
I knew that I had to see you again
and that we were going to be
together. And, y'know, men come up
to me all the time, give me their
numbers, ask me to get coffee, take
a jacuzzi - n'importe quoi - and I've
never said 'yes'. I'm not rude. I
just tell them, "No, thank you" or
"Some other time".

(beat)

But with you, toi, t'es irresistible!!

(subtitled)
You're irresistible.

Russell smiles proudly even though he doesn't know what it means.

RUSSELL
Y'know, we didn't meet by accident...

FRANCOISE
Yes, we did: I crushed your paint!

RUSSELL (after some time)
No, I mean, we were supposed to meet.

FRANCOISE
Mais, tu dis n'importe quoi!
(subtitled)
You don't know what you're talking about!

RUSSELL
Y'gotta stop speaking French. I don't understand a word.

Francoise nods 'OK'.

RUSSELL
(continuing)
No, really, I mean, how can you explain that I painted you and then you come along eight or nine hours later and crush my paint?

FRANCOISE (sincerely)
Just dumb luck. Don't try to explain it.

RUSSELL
You don't understand: you're the woman of my dreams!

Francoise caresses Russell's cheek affectionately and give him a peck on the forehead.

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/LIVINGROOM - DUSK

Judd is crashed on the couch when Russell enters. Russell is trying to contain his excitement while Judd is thinking about his own life and doesn't really notice that Russell is glowing.

RUSSELL
What's happenin'?

JUDD
Just hangin'. You?

RUSSELL

New job. A cabana.

JUDD

A lousy cabana? You do it.

RUSSELL

C'mon, it'll take three days.

JUDD

I can't; I'm busy.

RUSSELL

Whatcha-mean - busy?

JUDD

I gotta wedding coming up.

RUSSELL

Don't bullshit me: I know everyone you know and nobody I know is gettin' married anytime in the near future.

JUDD

That's not what Claire said.

RUSSELL

C'mon, man, this job'll take three days. I don't want to work alone...

(beat)

What'd she say?

JUDD

This 'n that...

RUSSELL

Stop foolin' around. Y'want this job or not?

JUDD

Sure.

RUSSELL

And I met the girl, I mean, the woman.

JUDD

"Woman" - what's that?

RUSSELL

That's like a girl, but older.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Oh yeah, the wedding's next Saturday.

That's not "this" Saturday, but the following one - OK?

RUSSELL
(continuing)
Great. Whose is it?

JUDD raises his eyebrows to say, 'moi'.

RUSSELL
(continuing)
What - the one of the hoes you boffed last month got knocked up?

JUDD
Well, as a matter of fact... you had your chance to know my fiance almost as well as I do... but as usual, you fucked-it-up. I guess that some of us have it... and then there's you!

RUSSELL
You must have taken too much mescaline in that university of yours because I wouldn't be caught dead in any pond that you'd go fishin' in!

JUDD
Then you must not be keepin too gooda track of your pole, sonny boy.

RUSSELL
I don't believe for a second that you're getting married, and if you were gonna get married, the last girl in the world you'd marry is some girl who I tried to...
(beat)
You're not. Not that...! Jesus-christmas! Did I tell you what she...

JUDD
I don't care. I love her and Claire said that the sooner we get married the longer it'll last.

RUSSELL
You're not serious?

JUDD
You bet your ass... but we haveta wait until her brother gets back from the Navy, so next Saturday's the date - are you free?

RUSSELL
Saturday, you said?

JUDD

Yeah.

RUSSELL starts to head for his room.

RUSSELL

The invitation's for two - right?

JUDD

The chick from the painting...?

(beat)

So what are you saying - true romance?

RUSSELL

You'll see. She's the most beautiful woman in the world.

JUDD

Y'see, I told you. Claire's always right. You just gotta know how to listen...

RUSSELL shakes his head as JUDD exits and we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. CABANA - DAY

Russell and Judd are hard at work on Francoise's cabana. Russell looks at his watch.

JUDD

What, you hungry already?

RUSSELL

Yeah, there was nada in the fridge for breakfast.

JUDD

Well nada doesn't go as far as it used to.

RUSSELL

Well, nada for two is one thing; nada for three just doesn't work...

JUDD

So if I ask you to get some lunch today are you going to fuck-it-up again?

RUSSELL

Tofu hoagie with yogurt dressing and a celery soda - right?

JUDD

And bring back a receipt, hombre.

Russell puts down his brush and heads for the cabana door. Just then he turns back around and watches the ladder fall smack onto JUDD'S head.

RUSSELL'S POV: THE LADDER FALLING ONTO JUDD

Russell springs to life and unconsciously lunges for JUDD knocking him out of the way. They're lying there on the floor arm-in-arm. But the ladder is still standing in its original position. It hasn't budged in years.

JUDD

Get-the-fuck-off-me, you Giacobozzi-homeowner!

Judd and Russell look at each other then at the ladder which comes violently crashing down in the exact spot where Judd was.

JUDD'S POV: THE LADDER FALLING ONTO THE FLOOR

Judd doesn't want to know what just happened.

JUDD

Get outta here, just get outta here, go get my lunch!

EXT. CABANA/HOUSE/STREET - DAY

Russell exits the cabana and heads towards the pick-up. He gets into it and we follow him as he tears out of the driveway. About a hundred feet later he comes to a halt. He pulls over to the side of the road in front of Francoise and Don's house and gets out. He looks down at his watch.

Francoise's car pulls into the driveway. Russell smiles as Francoise exits her car and they both head towards the front door of her house.

RUSSELL

You're not going to believe what just happened! I just saved JUDD'S life!

FRANCOISE

In my cabana?

RUSSELL

Uh-huh...

Russell leads Francoise into the house.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

Russell and Francoise enter, close the door, and fall into each other's arms.

RUSSELL

Listen, I've got a great idea:

FRANCOISE

What?

RUSSELL

We should go away, get outta here.

FRANCOISE

You're forgetting something.

RUSSELL

What?

FRANCOISE

I'm slightly married.... And in the last twenty years I haven't spent more than forty-eight hours away from Don.

RUSSELL

But we've only been together two days and we're already sneaking around like little kids.

FRANCOISE (half joking)

Mais tu es un gamin!

(subtitled)

But you are a little kid!

RUSSELL

Listen, I told you, no French. I don't understand a goddamn word of it.

FRANCOISE

C'est mieux comme ca...

(subtitled)

It's better like that...

(beat)

Anyway I'm supposed to go away this weekend for a medical conference in Chicago, but I can't for the life of me imagine sitting around a big room listening to a bunch of men talk about how brilliant they are and how they're going to save the world.

RUSSELL

Me neither... sounds boring...

FRANCOISE

So maybe I'll try to get out of it so that we can spend some time

together...

Francoise kisses Russell who smiles joyfully.

INT. CABANA - DAY

Judd steps back from his work and nods in disappointment. He decides to take a break. He lies down and puts his painter's cap over his eyes.

Judd looks suspiciously at the ladder. He gets back up and adjusts it so that it is completely secure. Then he lies back down.

After a few moments Russell bops in carrying their lunch; he's as happy as a clam.

RUSSELL

Workin' hard or hardly workin'?

JUDD

All of the above... and I'm going home. I'm too tired to work today...

RUSSELL

Yeah, I'm tired myself. I'll finish this wall and head over to Peyser's to collect our tab. You finished up the trims - right?

JUDD

You finished them up yesterday - didn't you?

Both of them livid, they stare at each other in disbelief.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Vicky is cleaning up the bakery and Don is sitting drinking a cup of coffee.

DON

Are you sure there's nothing I can do?

VICKY

Just kick back, dad, I'm sure mom will be back in a minute...

DON

Yeah, but I feel weird watching you work... lemme put something away at least...

VICKY

Dad, just hang. Enjoy the coffee, the view...

Don looks out the window and takes another sip of coffee.

DON

It is good coffee...

Don's face drops: he spots his lovely wife rollerblading across the street towards the store.

DON

(continuing)

What the hell... Vicky!

Francoise enters and skates over to Don and kisses him as usual.

FRANCOISE

Bonjour, ma cherie!

She skates over to Vicky and kisses her as usual.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Bonjour, ma cherie! Ca va?

(to Don)

Ca va?

(to both of them)

Ca va pas?

Don and Vicky just stand there watching the monster.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Il fait tres beau au'jourd'hui, non?

(subtitled)

It's a beautiful day - isn't it?

DON

Where have you been all afternoon?

FRANCOISE

Blading.

She smiles and displays her new blades by kicking up her foot.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Like 'em?

Vicky and Don don't know what to say.

FRANCOISE (to Vicky)

Merci pour avoir occuper de la
patisserie au'jourd'hui, ma cherie!

(subtitled)

Thanks for taking care of the bakery,
today, dear!

VICKY

No problem, ma.

DON

I've been waiting here over an hour for you. I picked up the tickets to go to Chicago tomorrow and I thought you might want to go to a show also so I got tickets for Miss Saigon...

Francoise skates over to the counter, looks strangely at Vicky, and picks up a piece of paper.

FRANCOISE

Oh my God! Vicky, why didn't you tell me about this? Two wedding cakes Sunday afternoon? What are we going to do?

VICKY

What d'ya mean - we always have a few cakes for the weekend?

FRANCOISE

Yeah, but look:

Francoise holds up the paper.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Do you see what kinds of cakes these are?

VICKY

Of course, I took the order!

FRANCOISE (quickly)

Triple layer cakes! And you know that the oven can only hold one at a time so you get back there and start mixing so that we can start bright and early tomorrow morning. Go'on, get back there...

Francoise gently pushes Vicky towards the back room. Then she skates back over to Don.

FRANCOISE

I'm sorry, Don, but there's no way I can go to Chicago tomorrow... there's way too much to do around here.

Don knows that she's lying.

DON

C'mere, sit down.

Don wheels her over to a table and sits her down.

DON

(continuing)

What the hell is going on?

FRANCOISE (whining like a little girl)

I hate those conventions, Don. I don't wanna sit around with the other wives and talk about lipstick.

DON

Why didn't you say something before? I mean, we always go together...

FRANCOISE

Because I never felt like this before.

DON

Well, what do you feel like?

FRANCOISE (smiling like an angel)

Like going home and having a nice dinner. I'm starved!

Francoise smiles and kisses Don on the cheek. Don just shakes his head.

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/LIVINGROOM - DUSK

Judd is naked lying face down on a massage table and Mary is rubbing oil onto her hands. She's getting ready to attack his tense shoulders. She grabs them and they're bricks.

MARY

Jesus... what the hell is this?

JUDD

What?

MARY

They're hard as rocks.

JUDD

That's good - isn't it?

MARY

No, it means that you're tense. What are you so worried about?

JUDD

Nothing really... just little things: falling off the face of the earth, the homeless kid at the 7-11 who calls me 'sir', the fact that I haven't spoken to my family in seven years... nothing really...

MARY

Can't you be serious about anything?

JUDD

I tried it once and it didn't work,
so...

Mary digs in deep into the top of JUDD'S spinal column and sends a jolt through his whole body. Judd practically flies off the table in pain.

JUDD

(continuing)

Hey, hey, hey! That doesn't feel
good.

Mary puts her hands back on him and tries to calm him down with a little affection. Judd lies back down on the table.

MARY

Listen, darling, I'm here to help
you. Stop resisting... or I'll snap
your neck...

(beat)

Y'know, we still haven't found a date
for Julie, the maid of honor. How
about Russell?

Russell enters in a furry. He's totally irate.

JUDD

Speak of the diable.

RUSSELL

Guess what, partner?

JUDD (uncaring)

What?

RUSSELL

Old-lady Peyser - that's what!

JUDD

What about her? Tell her we'll
finish up tomorrow morning.

RUSSELL

Today. She said today or never -
remember?

JUDD

I thought you we're going to take
care of the trims?

RUSSELL

You said two days ago you'd take care

of it!

JUDD

I most certainly did not!

RUSSELL

Five hundred bucks, right into the toilet, you irresponsible asshole!

JUDD

You're the one whose been doing the disappearing act these days! At least I show up!

RUSSELL

You show up to work at three o'clock in the afternoon and you're too tired to work because you've been screwing for the last thirty hours.

Judd looks over to Mary.

JUDD

Well, excuse me: but I happen to enjoy screwing!! As a matter of fact, I can't think of anything else that I'd ever rather be doing.

Mary chuckles. Russell is livid at the complicity between Judd and Mary.

RUSSELL

We're gonna finish the goddamn cabana and then that's it, we're history, finito!

JUDD

Y'know what you should do, asshole? Go paint a picture of a rat or a pig - then next time when she dumps you, you won't be jealous and disappointed!

Again Russell craves to say "Fuck you", but he can't bring himself to do it; he just clenches his teeth. He flies out of the living room and into his room but not before slamming the door. Judd and Mary shake their heads at each other as if they knew this day was coming.

MARY

Y'know, we should fix him up with Julie... they have the same temperament...

JUDD

Yeah, Mister and Misses Don Corleone!
(imitating Don

Corleone)

"She sheds a tear and you get cement shoes!"

MARY

Awh... that's just her way of saying that she cares...

Judd shakes his head.

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Francoise and Don sit down to dinner. Don is tense while everything is normal for Francoise.

FRANCOISE

It's great that Vicky has a date tonight - isn't it?

DON

He seemed OK.

There's awkward silence as Don watches Francoise eat.

DON

(continuing)

So first you take-up smoking, then the dress, then you insist on having the cabana painted, then "blading" - it's a little early for a mid-life crisis, isn't it?

FRANCOISE

I don't understand, everything is fine, dear...

DON

Then what's gotten into you lately?

FRANCOISE

What are you talking about - do I seem different or something?

DON

You don't listen to a word I say anymore. Listen: I'm your husband, we just celebrated our twentieth anniversary, I'm a doctor, I'm giving a lecture at the University of Chicago tomorrow night, we have tickets for a show on Saturday - does any of this ring any bells for you, Franny?

Francoise stops eating and looks at him; it appears that she doesn't understand what he's saying.

DON
(continuing)

Well?

FRANCOISE
Of course, ca va, ca va... I just need to do some things around the house this weekend. Call it, "spring cleaning". How's that sound?

DON
Like I'm being put up for adoption. Why can't you wait until next weekend?

FRANCOISE
Non, c'est pas possible.
(subtitled)
No, that's impossible.

DON
How can it be impossible? What is going on?

FRANCOISE
I dunno: I just have to go where the wind blows me... and the wind isn't blowing me to Chicago this weekend!

DON
Well, you let me know when the wind blows you back into my life!

Don throws down his utensils and napkin, stands up from the table and exits the room.

Francoise watches him solemnly but does nothing.

INT. RUSSELL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Russell is hard at work at his easel. We only see him from the front so we can't see what he is painting. Again, Russell is just wearing boxer shorts and sweating. His eyes are glued to the canvass and he looks as if he's possessed. Russell takes a moment to regard the painting as we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. RUSSELL'S ROOM - MORNING

Russell tiptoes into his room carrying a large picnic basket. He gently sets it down and regards the contents: wine, cheese, glasses, etc. He picks up the phone and dials a number.

RUSSELL (affectionately into phone)

Francoise, hey... how are you? You're not going to believe what I did: I packed a beautiful picnic lunch and I called and rented some rollerblades and made us a reservation at this little cottage about an hour away... How's that sound?

FRANCOISE (off)
Super! And I've got you something that you're really going to appreciate.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

Francoise holds a sexy piece of negligee against her body.

RUSSELL (off)
A present? For me? Great! OK, I'll be over in twenty minutes. He's gone?

FRANCOISE
Yeah, he just left for the airport.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RUSSELL'S ROOM - MORNING

Russell can't believe his ears. Finally the painting on the easel is revealed: a plane bursting into flames as it crashes to the ground.

RUSSELL
What do you mean just went to the airport?

FRANCOISE (off)
Y'think he's gonna walk to Chicago?

Russell looks over at his painting of the plane crashing.

RUSSELL
Oh shit!

He drops the phone, pulls down the painting and rushes out of his room.

FRANCOISE (off)
Hello? Hello?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Judd and Mary are entwined on the couch still half-asleep. Russell barrels into the room frantically searching for something.

JUDD

Bright 'n early, I see this morning,
Holmes... I'll meet you there later...

Judd notices that Russell is acting crazed.

JUDD

(continuing)

What's up?

RUSSELL

I gotta go to the airport! Where are
the goddamn keys?

JUDD

Kitchen table. What for?

Russell shows him the portrait of the plane crashing.

RUSSELL

This is what for!

Neither Judd nor Mary can believe their eyes. Russell has
obviously lost his mind.

JUDD

What-the-fuck-are-you-talking-about?

RUSSELL

No time now...

Russell flies out of the door and Judd runs after him.

JUDD

Russell!

MARY

Jesus, he's gonna get himself shot!

JUDD

Get dressed. We'll use your car!

EXT. SLACK HEAVEN - DAY

Carrying the painting of the plane crash Russell rushes into
the pick-up and takes off. He's absolutely possessed.

INT. POLICE CAR/EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The same Policeman opens a bag and daintily places a full cup
of coffee and a sugar-coated donut on the dashboard being
extremely careful not to spill any coffee or leave any crumbs
in the police car. Suddenly, the radar detector starts
BEEPING furiously. The Policeman looks up to see the pick-up
and Russell fly by.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. RUSSELL'S CAR/HIGHWAY - DAY

Russell looks down at his speedometer: 80.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

The Policeman looks down at his radar gun: 80. Then he looks down at coffee and donut that he just opened: he doesn't budge.

EXT. SLACK HEAVEN - DAY

FRANCOISE pulls up in front of Slack Heaven and sees JUDD and MARY quickly heading towards MARY's car.

FRANCOISE

Hey you, the painter: where's Russell?

JUDD

Who are you?

FRANCOISE

Your boss! Now tell me where Russell is!

JUDD

Airport...

FRANCOISE

Oh merde!

Francoise hits the gas and she's outta there. Judd and Mary get into their car and quickly follow her.

EXT. AIRPORT DROP-OFF ZONE - DAY

The pick-up screeches to a halt and superman bolts out of it faster than a speeding bullet... and still carrying his portrait of a plane crash.

INT. AIRPORT CHECK-IN DESK - DAY

The COUNTERGIRL is politely handing Don his boarding pass.

COUNTERGIRL

Here you are, sir, and have a pleasant flight!

INT. AIRPORT LARGE HALL - DAY

Russell runs through the airport like OJ SIMPSON during his better (Hertz) days. A SECURITY GUARD spots Russell and starts to follow him. Finally Russell finds the counter for

Chicago.

INT. AIRPORT CHECK-IN - DAY

Don approaches the check-in counter.

DON

And where's the gate?

COUNTERGIRL

It's right over there, sir, but you'd better hurry up; they're ready for departure.

Suddenly Russell runs right up to Don but has no idea who he is. Russell reaches over the counter and grabs the microphone used to announced "Now boarding". The Countergirl tries to grab it back from him.

COUNTERGIRL

(continuing)

Hey! Gimme that!

Don just stands there in amazement.

RUSSELL (into microphone)

"Don Franklin please report to the white courtesy phone, Don Franklin please report..."

Don grabs him by the arm and cuts him off.

DON

I'm Don Franklin, what do you want?

Russell takes a deep breath before he pronounces the almighty word.

RUSSELL

Look!

Russell shows him his painting of a plane crashing.

DON

So what? What is it? Who the hell are you?

The Guard rushes up behind Russell and grabs him in a bear hug; the painting crashes to the floor. An AIRPORT EXECUTIVE comes around the counter and rushes up to them.

EXECUTIVE

What's going on here?

RUSSELL (to Don)

You can't get on that plane!

EXECUTIVE (to Guard)
Get him outta here.
(to Don)
You don't know this lunatic - do you?

The Security Guard starts to drag Russell away.

DON
Never seen him before in my life...

The Executive starts to lead Don towards the plane.

EXECUTIVE
We're sorry for any inconvenience.
Right this way, sir...

Russell has no choice but to scream the four most offensive words in the English language.

RUSSELL (yelling)
Of course he knows me! I fucked his wife!

The Security Guard can't believe his ears; he stops dead in his tracks. Russell squirms free.

The Executive can't believe his ears. Don turns around and glares Russell in the eyes: he's ready to explode. Don walks back over to Russell.

DON
What did you say, son?

COUNTERGIRL (off)
Last call for flight 705 to Chicago.
Last call.

Don turns around to see them closing the doors to the plane.

RUSSELL (nervously)
I said, I fucked her.

Don doesn't believe him; he turns toward to plane.

RUSSELL
Francoise. I fucked her yesterday.

That's it, Don's cue to smash Russell's face: he launches towards Russell and pounces on him. The Executive tries to hold Don back but to no avail.

Don and Russell crash to the floor.

INT. AIRPORT FRONT DESK - DAY

Francoise enters and hits the information counter. The Counterperson is reading the newspaper.

FRANCOISE

Did you see a guy come in here
carrying a painting?

The Counterperson casually points down the aisle toward the Chicago zone. Francoise takes off. Judd and Mary enter and hit the information counter.

JUDD

You see a guy come in with a painting?

The Counterperson points down the aisle toward the Chicago zone.

JUDD

(continuing)

Thanks.

JUDD and MARY take off.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CHICAGO BOARDING ZONE - DAY

Don is on top of Russell strangling him but Russell is holding Don's wrists preventing him from doing any serious damage.

Judd rushes over and tackles Don off of Russell.

Francoise rushes over and breaks up Judd and Don.

Russell is lying on the floor with a bloody nose; he sees Francoise and gets excited.

RUSSELL (to Francoise)

Je suis vraiment desolee, mais il
fallait lui sauver la vie. Il serais
mort s'il a pris ce vol. Fais-moi
confiance, Francoise, je t'aime...

(subtitled)

I'm really sorry but I had to save
his life. Everyone would've died if
he took this plane. Trust me,
Francoise, I love you.

Judd and Francoise along with Mary and Don stare at him in amazement.

JUDD

So what - you've been doing Berlitz
behind my back?

RUSSELL

What are you talking about?

FRANCOISE

Tu parles tres bien Francais, connard!
(subtitled)
Your French is great, asshole!

JUDD

The French - when did you learn it?

RUSSELL

What are you talking about - I don't
speak French!

DON

Who cares if he speaks French or not?
I just want to know if what he said
is true or not!

Francoise finally has a clue what's going on and becomes
infuriated.

FRANCOISE

You two... you're fired!

JUDD (to Mary)

Twice in one week... shit!

DON

Francoise, I want an explanation now!

RUSSELL

Francoise, I'm sorry, just listen...

FRANCOISE (to Russell)

I said that you're fired: I don't
ever want to see you again! Don,
I'll talk to you at home! Let's go.
Now.

Francoise gives a parting grimace to Russell to say "Fuck
you", "Sorry", and "Thanks" all at the same time.

Don picks up his bags and follows Francoise out.

Judd goes over to Russell.

JUDD (impersonating)

"Well, this is a fine mess you've
gotten us into this time, Ollie..."

Russell frowns at him to say, "Fuck off".

JUDD (impersonating)

(continuing)

I mean, "We'll see you back at the
fort, Tonto..."

Russell picks up his painting while the Executive and

Security Guard watch him. He looks at the painting of the plane crash and then at the Executive wanting to tell him what a great service he has just performed.

RUSSELL (to Executive)
Awh... forget it...

EXECUTIVE (to Guard)
Get 'im outta here now!

The Guard leads Russell out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Policeman puts on his hat with authority and exit his car; he's already carrying a ticket in his hand. Slowly he approaches the drivers side of the car: et voila, our hero!

POLICEMAN
Did you get her?

RUSSELL
Who?

POLICEMAN
The girl... in the end, the good guy
always gets the girl...

Russell is despondent. He slowly nods his head 'no'. He doesn't even have enough life in him to utter the word.

POLICEMAN
(continuing)
Sorry to hear it. Well, here's
something for the effort.

The Policeman hands Russell the ticket.

RUSSELL
But I was only going fifty!

POLICEMAN
I know. This is for before, when you
were going to the airport...
Eighty: that's how I knew you were
going to see a girl...

Russell nods 'boy are you smart, asshole!'

POLICEMAN
(continuing)
Anyway, you drive carefully,
Russell... and have a nice day!

Russell's face drops at the sound of his Christian name. The Policeman smiles kindly and then heads back to the police car.

EXT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE/POOLSIDE - DAY

Vicky sits by the pool when Don comes over and sits down next to her.

VICKY

What are you doing here? I thought you were going to Chicago this morning?

DON

Some guy attacked me in the airport and told me why your mom has been acting so strange lately...

VICKY

Why's that?

DON

Well, I think it's better if she tells you herself...

Vicky understands exactly what is going on and comforts DON.

VICKY

Dad, most of my friends think that an extended relationship is when you let the asshole stay for breakfast the next morning... and you and mom have been married for twenty years... twenty years! If I spend twenty minutes with a guy I want a Nobel Prize!

(beat)

Listen, you just gotta say to yourself, "I should be thankful for twenty great years, not sorry because she screwed up for two days..."

Francoise passes through the gate and approaches them. Vicky gives Don a reassuring pat on the shoulder that says, "Be cool".

VICKY

(continuing)

Hi, ma... well, I'm gonna go inside...

FRANCOISE

Merci...

Vicky hugs both of them very tenderly and then exits.

FRANCOISE

(continuing)

Don...

DON

Francoise...

They stand there in silence: Francoise is ashamed and Don waits patiently for an explanation.

FRANCOISE

I have to apologize. I've been selfish and immature lately.

(beat)

And I wish that it was something that I could've controlled... I can't explain it... but all of sudden, everything was different... I felt "weird"... like I was in the wrong body... I dunno, I just looked down and I couldn't believe what I saw anymore... this ready-made life, with this French woman in America and her husband and her daughter and her bakery and... and it just hit me, "What if?"

DON

What if - what?

FRANCOISE

What if things were different? How would I feel? Is this where I should be now? I mean, was this all meant to be?

Don looks at Francoise with understanding.

INT. CLAIRE VOYANTE'S ATELIER - EVENING

Despondent, Russell enters Claire's shop.

CLAIRE (off)

Hi Russell!

(beat)

Just have a seat. I'll be with you in a minute.

Russell takes a seat. Once again he can perfectly overhear Claire's telephone conversation.

CLAIRE (off)

(continuing)

Listen, I can't be responsible for everyone's life. Imagine the weight if I knew that you were going to die and I couldn't do anything to stop it. I wouldn't say, "Sorry, sucker". I'd say, "Why don't you take a beautiful girl to your favorite restaurant and tie one on!"

Russell's face cringes at the thought of her knowing that his time is up.

CLAIRE (off)

(continuing)

Voyante means seer. I see things, things that ordinary people can't see. Big deal... everyone has their talents. OK, call next week and I'll tell you the end-of-the-world story again.

Claire hangs up.

CLAIRE (off)

(continuing)

C'mon in, Russell!

Russell hesitates before he goes in. Claire sees his inflamed red nose.

CLAIRE

Sweet Jesus, what happened to you?

RUSSELL

First tell me: should I take a beautiful girl to my favorite restaurant any time in the near future?

CLAIRE

Firstly Russell, you don't have a favorite restaurant. Secondly, you're protected by the spirit of your grandmother. That doesn't mean that you have the right to drive drunk or not to use condoms; that simply means that if you play it straight, you don't have anything to worry about.

RUSSELL

So, no tying-one-on with a beautiful girl?

CLAIRE

Not unless she's paying.

Russell is relieved.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

OK, so what happened to you?

RUSSELL

Well, Françoise - the woman from the painting - told me that her husband

was about to get on a plane to Chicago so - I dunno - I went to the airport and stopped him... because I had this dream that the plane was going to crash if he got on it...

CLAIRE

So what's the problem - did the plane crash?

RUSSELL

No, but I need to know if it would've crashed if he got on, if I did the right thing...

CLAIRE

Do you feel like you did the right thing?

RUSSELL

I don't know... I mean, how is it that I paint these women, then I meet them, but it never works out? Sometimes it seems that my gift is more of a curse than a blessing.

CLAIRE

All gifts are curses, Russell. "The meek shall inherit the astroturf."

Russell looks at her queerly.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

Do you know what your problem is?

RUSSELL

I come from a dysfunctional family and I expect too much out of life...?

CLAIRE

Hello! Hello! Is there anyone in there? Is anybody home, Russell?

Russell falls back in his seat. He doesn't understand what she's trying to say.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

Your problem is that you don't know who you are. I'm gonna give you a hint.

(She smiles widely at him.)

YOU ARE A CATALYST. Do you know what that is?

Russell shakes his head, 'no'.

CLAIRE

(continuing)

It's someone who helps other people change their lives. And I know that you don't know what I mean, but think about all of the women that you painted. Think about how they were before they met you and how they were after. You changed all of them. You should be very proud of yourself.

RUSSELL

What did I do for Françoise?

CLAIRE

You helped her answer all of her unanswered questions; you showed her exactly what was missing from her life...

RUSSELL

What's that?

CLAIRE

Nothing! Her life was perfect!

RUSSELL (sarcastically)

Fuckin' great!

CLAIRE

But she needed someone to show her that.

RUSSELL

And is that what I'm going to be all my life, the "catalyst"?

Can't I be happy? Can't someone come into my life and show me something??

CLAIRE

People are showing you things all the time; you just have to learn how to listen. And once you stop looking so anxiously for the perfect woman, she will find you.

RUSSELL

So what should I do?

CLAIRE

I don't know. You have to find that out for yourself.

RUSSELL

What d'ya mean - "you don't know"?
You're a seer, a medium...

CLAIRE

Actually I'm a small!

(beat)

What do you want - all the answers?
You don't even know what questions to
ask! Stop trying so hard. You're in
a good space. Everything will fall
into place if you just let it - OK?

RUSSELL

OK, so that's it - don't do anything?

CLAIRE

Exactly!

RUSSELL

Y'know, Claire, sometimes I think
that everything you say is complete
bullshit...

CLAIRE (smiling widely)

It very well could be, Russell, it
very well could be...

(beat)

(still smiling)

Either way, it's twenty bucks!

Russell shakes his head with disbelief.

EXT. FRANCOISE AND DON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Don forces a smile at Francoise. Both of them are more
relaxed now.

DON

Twenty years is a long time - isn't
it? - to be with one person.

FRANCOISE

I think it depends who the person
is...

DON

Well... I dunno... it just seems like
you needed some time alone, to sort
things out, make some decisions...

Francoise's eyes start to water. She can't believe that he's
being so understanding.

DON

(continuing)

And by the way, those kids can't
paint worth shit! I'm gonna have to

repaint the whole cabana myself!

Both of them laugh. Françoise smiles at him and shakes her head.

FRANCOISE (after some time)

All my life I always knew exactly what I was doing and exactly where I was going - and I think I needed a little vacation, a little disorder...

(beat)

It had nothing to do with you or me or Vicky or la patisserie ou rien. I just had to open my eyes a little wider, see what's out there - y'know what I mean?

DON

Exactly... only next time, just ask! There's no need to take-up smoking and start acting crazy...

FRANCOISE

I said, "Vacation". That means I'm back for good.

Françoise hugs Don.

INT. RUSSELL AND JUDD'S APARTMENT/JUDD'S ROOM - EVENING

Judd is sitting on the couch as Russell enters.

RUSSELL

Hey, what's happenin'?

JUDD

I'm hangin'... you feelin' a little more righteous, Holmes?

RUSSELL

I guess so. Yeah, I'm sorry about before, for disturbing you.

Judd accepts the apology with a nod.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

Where's the Misses?

JUDD

It's girl's night out tonight. I've been officially domesticated.

(beat)

I guess we all need some time alone once in a while. I got alot of things to think about now that I'm getting married. Y'ever get married?

There are a million things y'gotta do
to make everyone else happy...

RUSSELL

Not only have I never gotten married,
I don't know if I ever will. I'M THE
CATALYST!

(beat)

I go into people's lives and I change
them and then I leave...

JUDD

Have you been sniffing the paint
thinner again?

Russell nods 'no'.

JUDD

(continuing)

So I guess things aren't going to
work out with this woman of your
dreams...

(beat)

Well, I'll take you downstairs to
Slack Heaven and you can choose
another one. They're just sitting
down there waiting for Russell and
his Magic Paint Thinner to walk
through the door.

RUSSELL

Nah, not in the mood.

(beat)

So the honeymoon - where are you guys
goin'?

JUDD

Depends on how much money we get.

RUSSELL

An' I suppose that you-two'll be
moving out when you get back...

JUDD (playing dumb)

What? Didn't Mary tell you? She
already chose the wallpaper for the
baby's room - your old room...

Russell knows that Judd is joking. They smile warmly at each
other as we...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. CHURCH/JUDD AND MARY'S WEDDING - DAY

Judd and Mary meet and greet all the guests who have come to help them celebrate their wedding. Everyone is dressed well and it's a genuinely festive occasion.

Russell pulls up in the pick-up and gets out wearing a tuxedo with a plaid cummerbund and plaid hightop Pro-Keds. He looks great. He rushes up to Judd.

RUSSELL

Hey, sorry I'm late, did I miss anything?

JUDD

No, it's cool. As a matter of fact, you're early. I think it's the first time in your life that you're on time, man.

From the inside of the church Julie approaches Mary.

JULIE (to Mary)

Well, everything looks ready... it's still not too late to turn back though...

Julie and Mary smile at each other and then hug. Russell pulls Judd aside to give him their wedding present.

RUSSELL

Listen, if I don't have time later...

Russell slips Judd an envelope.

RUSSELL

(continuing)

I had to borrow it from my mother, but that's OK - she only charges thirty percent interest compounded hourly.

JUDD

"A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do", I always say...

Mary and Julie approach Russell and Judd. The four of them face each other. Russell slowly looks up at Julie's face. Julie is beaming, absolutely radiating. Russell stares deep into her eyes.

Julie can't take her eyes off of Russell.

MARY

Russell, I'd like you to meet my best
friend in the whole wide world, Julie.

There's silence as the four of them just stand there waiting
for Russell to say something. But he can't.

MARY

(continuing)

Oh yeah... you guys have something in
common, I think: you both paint.

Russell wants to savor every second of it. Judd and Mary are
dumbfounded; they have no idea what's going on.

JUDD (to Russell)

C'mon, dummy, stick out your hand...

Russell slowly snaps back into reality and sticks out his
hand.

Julie reaches out and slowly and sensuously slides her hand
into Russell's while continuing to stare into his eyes.

Russell's lips start to quiver.

RUSSELL (timidly)

... nice to meet you...

Julie looks intensely and curiously at Russell.

JULIE (to Russell)

Don't I know you from somewhere?

Russell stands there gaping - "Who - me?"

Judd and Mary embrace and walk off to greet Claire Voyante as
the wedding band kicks in.

Russell and Julie are left standing there in amazement as
the...

CREDITS ROLL

